

THOMAS P. DiNAPOLI
STATE COMPTROLLER



110 STATE STREET
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12236

STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER

May 8, 2008

Mr. George B. Alexander
Board of Parole Chairman
New York State Division of Parole
97 Central Avenue - 4th floor
Albany, NY 12206

Re: Network Security Controls
Report 2007-S-82

Dear Chairman Alexander:

Pursuant to the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and Article II, Section 8 of the State Finance Law, we audited selected aspects of the security controls in place over the Division of Parole's computer network. Our audit covered the period July 10, 2007 through December 6, 2007.

A. Background

For over 70 years the Division of Parole (Division) has been responsible for preparing inmates for release and supervising them to the successful completion of their sentence. These responsibilities are carried out by field and facility Division staff. The Division comprises over 30 offices across the 5 regions: Central Adirondack, Western Southern, Mid-Hudson/Long Island, Metro I, and Metro II.

The Division currently supervises 45,000 parolees. The supervision process begins with a discharge plan developed by Division staff working within a State correctional facility even before the inmate's release from the correctional facility. Division field officers in the community visit with parolees at their residence, meet with them regularly at scheduled office visits, and make unannounced visits to the parolee's work or program location. These officers also conduct random drug tests of parolees in the community. In addition, the field officers assist parolees in obtaining vocational or rehabilitative services. The Division has created a computer network (Network) to help carry out its duties. Division employees use the Network to access the Internet and e-mail, agency applications, as well as shared files.

The Division must comply with New York State's Cyber Security Policy (Security Policy),

which is promulgated by the Office of Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure Coordination (CSCIC). The Security Policy defines the minimum information security requirements that all State entities must meet.

B. Audit Scope, Objective and Methodology

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We audited selected aspects of the security controls in place over the Network. Our audit covered the period July 10, 2007 through December 6, 2007. The objective of our performance audit was to determine whether the Division has established adequate security controls to minimize the risks of unauthorized access to its data and resources. Our audit provided a snapshot of the Network's security controls at a particular point in time.

To accomplish our objective, we reviewed Division policies and procedures relating to computer networks, equipment and applications. We interviewed Division technical staff responsible for administering Network security and operations. We also examined agency records and reports pertinent to our audit scope. In addition, in coordination with Division officials, we performed vulnerability assessments of the Network. In performing these assessments, we used various tools and techniques to identify Network vulnerabilities and to determine how these vulnerabilities could be exploited.

In addition to being the State Auditor, the Comptroller performs certain other constitutionally and statutorily mandated duties as the chief fiscal officer of New York State. These include operating the State's accounting system; preparing the State's financial statements; and approving State contracts, refunds, and other payments. In addition, the Comptroller appoints members to certain boards, commissions and public authorities, some of whom have minority voting rights. These duties may be considered management functions for purposes of evaluating organizational independence under generally accepted government auditing standards. In our opinion, these functions do not affect our ability to conduct independent audits of program performance.

C. Results of Audit

Detailed results of our audit were provided to Division officials during the conduct of our audit. The details of our findings and recommendations are not included here due to the sensitivity of the information and the potential risk associated with the release of such information. As part of our audit, we identified certain areas in which the controls needed to be improved. We presented this information to Division officials, and they stated that they have already implemented some of the recommendations and plan on implementing the remainder within the calendar year.

Recommendation

Implement the specific recommendations for strengthening Network security that were provided to Division officials during the audit.

We provided a draft copy of this report to Division officials for their review and comment. Their comments were considered in preparing this report and are included as Appendix A.

Within 90 days of the final release of this report, as required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, the Chairman of the Board of Parole shall report to the Governor, the State Comptroller, and the leaders of the Legislature and fiscal committees, advising what steps were taken to implement the recommendations contained herein, and where recommendations were not implemented, the reasons therefor.

Major contributors to this report include Nadine Morrell, Mark Ren, Eric Booker, Corey Harrell, and Jennifer Van Tassell. We wish to thank the management and staff of the Division of Parole for the courtesy and cooperation extended to our auditors during this audit.

Very truly yours,

Brian Reilly
Audit Manager

cc: Tom Lukacs, Division of Budget
Carmen Maldonado, Division of State Government Accountability



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF PAROLE
97 CENTRAL AVENUE
ALBANY, NY 12206

DAVID A. PATERSON
GOVERNOR

GEORGE B. ALEXANDER
CHAIRMAN

April 16, 2008

Mr. Brian O. Reilly
Audit Manager
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability
110 State Street – 11th Floor
Albany, NY 12236

Dear Mr. Reilly:

The New York State Division of Parole (Division) has received and read the Office of the State Comptroller's (OSC) draft audit report (2007-S-82) entitled "Network Security Controls" and agrees with the findings.

Overall, we view this audit as a positive assessment of the Division's Office of Information Services' (OIS) network security practices. The Division has already implemented some of the recommendations contained in the report and plans on implementing the remainder within the calendar year.

The Division recognizes the importance of establishing and maintaining an effective set of information security measures. We greatly appreciate the efforts of the OSC auditors in assisting the Division to identify ways of improving our network security measures and making our data systems more secure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Felix Rosa".

Felix Rosa
Executive Director

c: G. Dunn
L. Hammond
M. Perrotty McLaughlin
J. Nesich
M. Ostermann

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